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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/23/2014

TAGS: PREL KPKO SO AU

SUBJECT: USAU: AFRICAN UNION TO NAME NEW SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE FOR SOMALIA

Classified By: USAU AMBASSADOR MICHAEL A. BATTLE, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (U) This message is from USAU Ambassador Battle.

¶2. (C) The African Union (AU) will soon announce the appointment of Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra as the Special Representative of the Commission Chairperson (SRCC) for Somalia, replacing Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira. Diarra, a long-time Malian magistrate and diplomat, will leave his post as director of the African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) in Algiers and assume his new duties on January 1, 2010.

¶3. (C) AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra informed AF Deputy Assistant Secretary Karl Wycoff about Diarra's selection during a November 19 meeting in his AU headquarters office. Wycoff said he was pleased by Diarra's nomination. Lamamra's assessment of Diarra was positive. Diarra will report to Lamamra on the political developments inside Somalia and on efforts to achieve a political solution.

¶4. (C) Bwakira, a Burundian, was regarded by some AU observers and AU interlocutors as being weak and ineffective, and often not telling it like it is when asked to assess the political situation in Somalia. Some believed that Bwakira would distort the truth in order not to frighten away international donors. In addition, there was tension between Bwakira and UN Special Envoy for Somalia Ould Abdallah that contributed to a dysfunctional relationship between the two offices.

¶5. (U) At ACSRT, where he began working in 2006, Diarra was responsible for overseeing programs intended to strengthen the capacity of the AU and its member states to prevent and combat terrorism. ACSRT staff also collects information about terrorist activities and organizations threatening Africa, and the organization also develops training programs for national and regional entities across the continent. ACSRT was established in Algiers by the AU in 2004.

¶6. (U) BIOGRAPHIC NOTES: Diarra was born in 1952 in Gao, Mali, and is married with four children. He holds a law degree from the University of Poitiers in France, and he has

a diploma from the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Bamako. He attended training on the U.S. judicial system in 1993. During his career, he has served as a prosecutor and judge in Mali, but also as justice minister, labor and civil service minister, secretary general of the presidency, and ambassador to Tunisia. He speaks French and English.

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